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THE EXPRESSION SÁ-DÚG IN EARLY SUMERIAN TEXTS

BY GEORGE A. BARTON

This expression () occurs in the early texts from Telloh, and was apparently employed in different ways in different periods. Thus in the Cone inscriptions of Urkagina (*Découvertes*, LI, x, 21, 25, 29; LII, ix, 22, 26, 30), Thureau-Dangin regards it as a unit of liquid measure. He renders it in these passages (*Sumerischen und akkadischen Königsinschriften*, 51 ff.), "Amphora." He tells us in a footnote (*ibid.*, p. 50, n. o) that an unpublished tablet clearly proves SÁ-DÚG to have been in the pre-Sargonic time a designation of a denomination in liquid measure. A text (AO, 3308) published by the same scholar in the *Rev. d'Assyriologie*, V, 78, proves that in liquid measure the QA was the smallest unit and that thirty QA made a DUG (). Thureau-Dangin accordingly infers that the SÁ-DÚG was larger than the DUG.

With reference to this interpretation in so far as it applies to the inscriptions of Urkagina, the writer feels considerable skepticism. As will be pointed out below SÁ-DÚG was in the Sargonic period an adjective descriptive of a certain kind of GUR, and in the period of Ur passed into a noun which apparently denoted "royal revenue." Paleographically, the passages in Urkagina lend themselves to an adjectival interpretation of SÁ-DÚG. In *Découvertes* (LI, x, 25), the grouping of the numerals indicates that we should read 3 KAS HUBUR SÁ DÚG, i.e., "3 standard HUBUR of strong drink." In l. 21 this rendering is favored, while the positions of the numerals in the other passages are not opposed to such a rendering, since they conform to the method of extending other numerals as seen in col. x, 17. If SÁ-DÚG is an adjective its use is similar to that in the Sargonic period. AO, 4156, published in Cros, *Nouvelles fouilles de Telloh*, 181, proves HUBUR to be a liquid measure larger than a DUG.

Two reasons may be urged against regarding SÁ-DÚG as an adjective in these passages. Urkagina twice uses KAS HUBUR alone

(LI, x, 32, 35). While at first sight this would seem to justify Thureau-Dangin's rendering, it is equally open to the one suggested here. These jars may have been of the HUBUR form, but not of the proper size to be called SÁ-DÚG. Another reason for accepting Thureau-Dangin's interpretation is the fact of the unpublished text which he quotes and the scholarly accuracy of Thureau-Dangin himself. These considerations lead us to do more than express skepticisms as to the correctness of his interpretation of SÁ-DÚG, and to await with interest the publication of the text referred to.

Even if Thureau-Dangin is right, another use of SÁ-DÚG is discernible at Telloh in the Sargonic period, when it appears as the name of a dry-measure. In Thureau-Dangin's *Recueil de tablettes chaldéennes*,¹ Nos. 120, 124 are receipts for grain measured in the terms of GUR SÁ-DÚG. As is well known all the tablets of the pre-Sargonic time give measurements of grain in terms of the GUR SAG-GÁL (𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶). Allotte de la Fuyë has clearly shown in his article published in the *Rev. d'Assyriologie* (VII, 31 ff.) (cf. also the *Journal asiatique*, 10 série, Tom. XIII, 235 ff.), that the GUR SAG-GÁL consisted of 144 QA. He has also shown (and the texts enable one to test the correctness of the statement) that quarters of the GUR, or 36 QA, were designated by the sign 𐎶, which was written 𐎶 for two quarters and 𐎶𐎶 for three quarters. It was, of course, never necessary to express more than three quarters for the addition of another quarter completed the GUR.

It is probable that the GUR SÁ-DÚG introduced in the Sargonic period was identical with the GUR of Agade (R.T.C., 118) and consisted of 300 QA as did the GUR in use at Telloh in the time of the dynasty of Ur.² The reasons for this view are: (1) In designating subdivisions of the GUR of 300 QA 𐎶 or 𐎶𐎶 stood for sixty QA and to indicate the multiples of sixty this symbol was written 𐎶𐎶, 𐎶𐎶𐎶, 𐎶𐎶𐎶𐎶, respectively indicating 120, 180, and 240 QA. As the addition of a fifth "sixty" completed the GUR, the sign was never written in this notation more than four times, just as in the notation of the GUR SAG-GÁL, it was never written more than three times.

¹ Cf. ZA, XVII, 94, 95.

² Indeed in one tablet of the Ur period (R.T.C., 249), this GUR is still called the GUR of Agade.

(2) In a fragmentary Sargonic tablet recently published (Thureau-Dangin, *Inventaire des tablettes de Telloh*, Paris 1910, Pl. 4, No. 1079) we have clearly a GUR of dry measure represented which contained 300 QA, for in l. 3 the QA are designated by the sign 𒊕. It is true that this GUR is not called in the extant portion of this tablet by the name SÁ-DÚG, but it is equally clear that it is not called by the name LUGAL. Since this GUR of 300 QA could not be the GUR SAG-GÁL it follows that it is the GUR SÁ-DÚG or GUR of Agade.³

The GUR SÁ-DÚG, or the GUR of 300 QA, did not, however, at once displace the GUR SAG-GÁL of 144 QA; for the GUR SAG-GÁL not only appears in tablets of the time of Sargon (cf. *Recueil de tablettes chaldéennes*, 115 and 124), but is found in a text dated in the time of GUDEA as well (cf. Pinches, *Amherst Tablets*, No. 13). It is probable that the larger GUR was the GUR of Agade, introduced at Telloh by the government of the time of Sargon as the standard of measurement for the collection of taxes, but that in other transactions the older measurement prevailed. By the Ur period the larger GUR had displaced the other and became the universal standard of measurement, though sometimes called by its old name.

In the Ur period, SÁ-DÚG had apparently become a term for the royal taxes or imposts. It is thus applied to quantities of reeds delivered to the king in Barton's *Haverford Library Collection* (I, pl. 16, iv, 1);⁴ also in another text published in Thureau-Dangin's *Recueil de tablettes chaldéennes*, No. 306, iv, 2.

This use of it to denote taxes in general apparently grew out of its earlier use as a designation of the GUR in which imposts to the government were paid. Probably SÁ-DÚG in such usage meant originally "that which is declared to be right" (cf. Br. 532 and 9526 or 9531, also M. 7247), i.e., "the standard."

³ That the GUR of Agade consisted of 300 QA Genouillac (TSA, p. lxviii, n. 3) recognizes.

⁴ Cf. Vol. XXVII of this Journal, p. 325, n. 19.